Seattle Light Rail Review Panel
Meeting Notes for February 1, 2005

Agenda Items
- Roosevelt Station Presentation
- Northgate Station Presentation

Commissioners Present
- Jay Lazerwitz
- David Spiker, Chair
- Pam Beyette
- George Blomberg
- Tory Laughlin Taylor
- Richard Andrews

Staff Present
- John Walser, Sound Transit
- Holly Godard, CityDesign

The meeting opened with introductions.

Light Rail Review Panel Business:
Holly noted that she would be sending out meeting notes for the Panel to review. Also, there are no meetings scheduled for the Panel after this one.

Overview:
Tonight's presentations will still be at the predesign conceptual stage. The projects will still look diagrammatic and contextual. The Roosevelt Station will be presented first. It is a cut and cover station. The station will be about 550 feet long, shaped like a box by approximately 65 feet wide. The staging area includes QFC property. The Station is located at 12th Avenue between 65th and 67th Street. Discussions with SDOT and Roosevelt High School are ongoing to determine the nature of the pedestrian connection.

Public comment:
No members of the public were present to comment.

Roosevelt Station:

Presentation:
David Hewitt of Hewitt Architects

The architect described the area context as an area of lively retail at NE 65th Street and 12th Avenue NE with single family residences one block away. Zoning in the area is Neighborhood Commercial with a height limit of 65 feet.(NC3-65) and Lowrise residential (L3) with a mix of lowrise residential buildings and mixed use buildings. The

High School school buses queue along 12th Avenue NE. next to the proposed station entries.

The south head house is proposed to have glass pavilions to present architectural language that is open to both NE 65th Street and 12th Avenue NE. The station entry will be on the corner. There is an overhang that wraps the entry for overhead weather protection. The stair enclosure is glass as well. The elevator descends directly to the platform with no mezzanine. The station will be about 65 feet deep. There is also an escalator system with fire shutters.

The north head house has an entry on the corner. This end of the station is 85 feet deep. There would be two elevators directly exposed to the street. Glass would be the identifying feature again as per the south head house. The station vent would be located on the south edge of the entry plaza. This entry will have a service mezzanine. Adjacent development is contemplated because the area used for staging will become available for development. This head house could be approached from both sides if adjacent development desires the connection.

In the station itself, braces forming X's will be used; the resulting giant diamond shapes would be visible at the mezzanine level. The patron would pass through the huge diamond voids while descending or ascending the escalators.

Questions and Discussion:
Could you clarify the x-shaped braces? They are large structural beams which stabilize the station box. Instead of orthogonal bracing there could be diamond bracing which could be a dramatic expression of the technology.

What is the development on the south entry site? This will be a service area and access path. It could also serve as a screen to the adjacent development. Only one service area is planned right now to serve both north and south station entrances.

Do you have elevations, sections or perspectives of stations at grade? The Hewitt team was held back from further development as per direction from Sound Transit so there are not further studies to show.

What is the nature of future development nearby? This zone (L3 zone) is still zoned at 30 feet, but rezoning could be considered. Adjacent development could be higher if rezoned later.

How does the vent fit into present zoning? The vent must be 40 feet from an opening. Either 40 feet high or 40 feet down the road.

Explain the service entry off of 65th. The future design should protect the 65th street wall as much as possible.

Can you describe the nature of the north end entry a bit more? There is a service mezzanine, but not for public circulation at this time. The circulation pattern could change in future. The circulation is set up to be a mirror circulation of the south entry. There are two elevators which go straight to the platform and escalators would be added later if there is more ridership. These elevators rise 90 feet and can hold approximately 20 people and travel at a reasonably high speed. New development at the site may cause further development of the escalators.

What are the elevator materials? The elevator materials are proposed to be glass.

E*xplain the structural diamond elements a bit more.* The structural beams are about 45 feet across with a depth of beam of about 7 feet. The beams themselves are shaped with facets and become sculptural elements themselves.

What are options to getting students to /from high school? The exact pedestrian behavior of the age group would be somewhat hard to control, but way-finding elements could be used to direct a safe crossing. For instance a marked crosswalk, curbs, landscaped berms or barriers could help direct pedestrian flow. There is parking along both sides of 12th Avenue.

Will the stations have enough design presence to differ from the surrounding buildings? The construction materials usually differ from multifamily materials, additionally public art will be considered as part of the plan.

How will staging area be left? Once staging needs are over the site will be bladed level and hydroseeded for a new developer or cleared for a new development.

Is there a place for parking? The Station could allow for two layers of adjacent development parking over the top of the station box.

What will the roof of the station look like? The roof hasn't been studied at this point. However, it should be an expressive architectural gesture.

Is there any possibility to get light to the platform? Light could penetrate at the escalators, or it could be in the form of a huge light fixture. The station platform is 380 feet long and could have the structural diamond grill to incorporate natural light, lighting as art and fixtures. There is great lighting opportunity here.

Action and Summary:
The Panel thanks Sound Transit and Hewitt Architects. The Panel appreciates the simplification of patron circulation at this station. The Panel feels that the direct street to platform circulation is very desirable and is an important element to retain at this location. The Panel understands that the escalators are not the "turn back" type but a linear sequence through the fire shutters to the next escalator. The Panel recommends approval of the design at this point. **The Panel members present voted to approve this preliminary (15%) design.**

Overview Northgate Mall Station:

The task this evening is to present and seek approval of the Northgate station alignment (baseline scheme). The proposal is to have entries on the Northgate Mall site and the Metro Transit station site. Thus there would be a transit connection to both the transit station and Northgate Mall. A second alignment is recently under study and will be presented for discussion purposes. Sound Transit is however asking for approval of the baseline scheme.

The Baseline scheme has two contexts; the current metro station and alignment and a multiple level transit development of two or three stories. The proposed Transit Oriented Development (TOD) must mesh with the light rail alignment. This proposal requires planning work with many agencies.

Presentation:
David Hewitt of Hewitt Architects

The proposed Transit Oriented Development is at the corner of 1st Avenue and 103rd. Street. There may be 1.8 million square feet of new development. This station is proposed to span 103rd Street as a pedestrian link and north entrance on the Northgate Mall property. The Transit Oriented Development serves as a direct link to the transit station. The South entry will have a mezzanine, but the north would not. At the south entry one would buy a ticket on the mezzanine and then go up to the railway platform. Paratransit and parking is nearby. Future curb lines at the corner of 1st and 103rd would be reconfigured once the Transit Oriented Development is in place. There could be a large plaza which could serve well for art installations. The Station is a bold statement to signal the "end of the line" and to catch passengers from the new development and Mall. There would be structural elements at each end. The station would be largely transparent and the roof would be low enough to protect patrons from rain. Wind screens would help regulate the patron environment. There would be a "tail track" for trains which were not in use during a part of the day. It would extend north of the station and be elevated like the rest of the track at this location.

Mr. Hewitt presented a 2nd alternative which at this point is a sketch problem/exploration. In this design scenario the tail track would be located next to the two other tracks and serve the same lay-over purpose. For this width of station the station would look like a large exterior room and would span 1st Avenue with large piers and beams. Circulation would be vertical in nature as patrons go to and from the Metro bus transit stops at ground level and the light rail platforms above. There would be two platforms and 3 tracks.

Sound Transit management is working with property owners to identify the scope of cost savings and design simplification. This second approach is still at the study stage to see

if it might be advanced further. This scenario has no connection to Northgate Mall; that function could happen further down the block as part of the TOD. There are still a lot of issues to explore and many areas under the raised track are still to be designed.

Panel Discussion and Questions:

At this station is one higher than the freeway? Yes, patrons would be 4 to 6 feet above the freeway. The station should be somewhat of a "beacon"

Describe the future Transit Oriented Development. It could be a mix of office buildings, retail, and parking. It should have good links to sidewalks, the Mall and the transit facilities.

Why is the ticket vending up one level at the south end? The ticketing location should match the TOD platform level. The ground level may be all bus transfer when the bus transit center moves to this 1st Avenue location. The retail, Mall and TOD are all at the podium level. There should be support retail such as small grocery, cleaners, etc. on the edge of the 2200 car parking garage. There should be significant pedestrian flow to and from the parking garage and light rail platform. Parking is below the podium. A 450 car park to the north would also come to this area. The podium will feed the Mall and transit from the parking garage.

Does the pedestrian presence on the street go away? 3rd Avenue will be a newly designed street with the TOD. The pedestrian would use the TOD podium level for entry to the station from the east. The pedestrian connection to the station from the nearest sidewalk would be from 103rd Street to the podium level.

Where is pedestrian environment sacrificed? The pedestrian environment is probably compromised the most at 1st Avenue and at 103rd street. In the current planning there are a lot of "moving parts" with design issues to be resolved. Currently, the pedestrian environment on these streets is poor and with new planning there could be improvements all around.

The mezzanine and podium level at this location could work very well.

How high is the station walkway over 103rd? The walkway would be 50 feet high at this location. The span would be approximately 100 feet to connect with the Northgate Mall property. The full urban design prospect will become more clear with further study. The station should appear to lock on to the block and the TOD. There should be a definite and recognizable terminus. The station could look monumental in size and scale which could be good in this location. Issues for future study include how the connection of the transit center with the TOD would look and function. The full block would become a full multimodal transit center.

How would one walk to Northgate Mall with the alternative scheme? While the baseline station proposal has a bridge to mall site a new connection to the Mall site would have to be developed as part of the TOD development. It could take the form of a bridge as well at the corner where the baseline study shows a connection, or further east along the block. The alternative, however, does not impede expansion to mall site.

Will metro really move their operation to 1st Avenue? It is conceivable that they may not move their operation, but King County wants the property to redevelop for the TOD.

Do we have a preference of these alternatives to communicate to Sound Transit? Do The TOD pedestrian connections are very interesting to contemplate. Linking the Metro transit and this light rail connection could result in a very comprehensible approach to making connections. The Panel is very open to the new alternative.

Action and Summary:
The Panel thanked the design team. The Northgate Station alternative has appeal and the Panel would like to note the positive aspects of the alternative. The Panel likes the clarity of the alternative concept as it reinforces important connections; transit modes, retail, office, parking, pedestrian oriented design. Locating the Metro Transit under the station is a positive design concept to link the two. The Panel notes the strength of linking planning with King County TOD concepts. There does need to be a deliberate connection to Northgate Mall. This alternative appears to limit the flexibility of 1st Avenue as it is shown in this sketch problem. The tail track alongside the other track is a better resolution than the spur extending north of the baseline alternative. The Panel hopes to see more study and resolution to this alternative design. Overall, the Panel appreciates the bold statement of the elevated station. The Panel applauds the strong links to the Mall and Metro transit center. Clear circulation and a good patron experience are strong elements of the design.

The baseline alternative is positive in that it connects the Mall corner to the light rail station. The Panel likes the bridge-like, attenuated, quality of the station and recommends that the designer's study the station and alternatives to bring the light rail portal into the Mall site. **The Panel members present voted to approve this preliminary (15%) design.**

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